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## STORY OF A RANCH

By BARBARA PHIPPS

Inez was a little Mexican girl in southern California. There are many Mexicans there living peaceably under the United States government. They were there when California passed to Uncle Sam after the Mexican war, and they remained there.

Bob Atherton was a young New Yorker who went west to engage in ranching. He had been in the southwest a couple of months without seeing any woman except of low degree and proportionately homely, when he met Inez. She was rigged out in Mexican style, with a lot of gay colors and gold lace. Her eyes were very black and her lashes long. Her complexion was olive and her cheeks red.

The meeting occurred when the two were riding over the plains. Inez rode astride; her long black hair hung, a cable, under a man's sombrero.

"Good morning, senorita," said Bob. "Good morning, senor," was the re-

"Where are you going, senorita?" "Home. I have been out looking for

some stray sheep. Have you any tobacco, senor?" Bob produced tobacco. Inez produced

cigarette paper and rolled a cigarette on the flat topped pommel of her sad-

"May I see you to your home?" asked

"You may, senor."

That was the beginning of it. The next step was Bob and Inez sitting on a log on the bank of a stream. Bob took her hand in his. He failed to notice that it was short and thick and the skin was rough. He failed also to notice that the cable at her back was composed of very coarse hairs. There was nothing soft or silky about it. Putting one arm around her waist, he kissed her. Perhaps the really most attractive thing about her was the feminine turning of her head and drop-

ping of her eyes.

Ten miles' distant from Atherton's ranch was Chambers' ranch. Chambers was an eastern gentleman of wealth who had invested in a ranch, the management of which he delegated to another. About the time that Atherton had become spoons with Inez, Chambers visited his property, bringing with him his wife and their daughter, Clara. Miss Clara had been longing for a bit of ranch life and was de lighted with it. The morning after her arrival she rode out on horseback with her father, inspecting his flocks. On the way they met Atherton and Inez. There are not so many people in that region as in New York, and when they meet they don't hurry on-they salute and often stop for a chat. Mr. Chambers reined in and asked Atherton some questions as to locations and other matters. Then there was some general conversation, in which Clara joined.

She was the first lady Bob had seen in months. From her he turned his eyes upon Inez. Great heavens! Could this dumpy, coarse little creature be the beauty to whom he had been making love? Inez was conscious of the change. She saw the difference between Miss Chambers and herself and its effect upon her lover. Bringing her quirt down on her horse's haunches, she sent him onward.

Atherton was annoyed. He regretted that he had been caught by the eastern girl in company with the Mexican. He was mortified that Inez should have left him in this abrupt manner, evidently jealous. He must either ride after her or let her go her way. He

chose the latter course. Not only this, but when the others moved on be moved with them.

That was the end of Atherton's romance. From the time he laid his eyes on Clara Chambers, he saw Inez as she was. He had not the assurance to drop the latter at once. He went to see her and tried to reassure her. He failed and that made matters worse. When a man is passing from one woman to another the surest way to snap their relations is for her to show jealousy. Inez did not improve matters. Bob gradually dropped her.

Naturally he sought the Chambers, who were of his own class, and for the same reason he was welcomed by them. Of course Inez was not ignor-

ant of this.

One day when Bob was out looking after his sheep he saw Clara riding alone. He was about to join her when he saw Inez riding in the opposide direction from Clara. The two girls met, and Bob saw that something was being said between them. Then Inez pointed with her finger. Clara had evidently asked the way somewhere.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Bob in an agonized tone, and, digging his spurs into his horse's flanks, he shot off toward Clara. She was going directly toward a quicksand. She was nearly two miles from Bob and a quarter of a mile from the quicksand. Bob was going like the wind, but before he could reach her her horse began to flounder. By the time he reached the margin of hard ground the animal was half immersed. Clara, who rode sidewise, was still untouched by the sand. Bob released his lariat, which he always carried, and, whirling it, dropped the noose over her shoulders.

The horse was lost, but the woman

was saved.

Neither Atherton nor Miss Chambers said a word to any one about Inez sending her rival over the quicksand. Clara went east within a few days. Bob left his ranch for parts unknown and never saw the Mexican girl again.

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